

From the Sixteenth District—W. N. Thompson.

From the Sixth District—J. C. Walker.

The Rev. Dr. Harrison, of the Reformed Episcopal Church, officiated as chaplain.

The President then addressed the Senate, and declared it formally open for business.

On motion of Mr. Lykes, the rules of the Senate at its last session were adopted for the present session, until further ordered.

On motion of Mr. Walker of the 23d District, the Senate took a recess until 4 P. M.

FOUR O'CLOCK, P. M.

The Senate met pursuant to adjournment.

The President in the chair.

The roll being called, the following Senators answered to their names:

Mr. President, Messrs. Barnes, Bryson, Durkee, French, Genova, Hagan, Hatcher, Johnson, Jones, Judge, Leslie, Long, Lykes, McAuley, McClenny, McMeekin, McKinnon, Meacham, Niblack, Orman, Patterson, Richard, Speer, Thompson, Walker of the 23d, Walker of the 6th and Walls—28.

A quorum present.

On motion of Mr. Walker of the 23d District, Mr. Leslie of the 30th District, on the presentation of his certificate, was sworn in by Judge White of the Second Judicial District.

Mr. Thompson of the 16th District moved that the Senate proceed to the election of officers;

Which was agreed to.

Mr. Walker of the 23d District nominated the following persons as officers of the Senate:

James G. Gibbs, for Secretary; W. H. Babcock, for Assistant Secretary; J. W. Rackley, for Recording Clerk; I. M. Auld, for Engrossing Clerk; L. B. Wombell, for Enrolling Clerk; L. Harrison, for Sergeant-at-Arms; A. J. Philips, for Door Keeper; Wm. Thomas, for Messenger; Thomas Mason, for Janitor; Rev. Dr. J. S. Harrison, for Chaplain.

On motion, the several nominees were elected by acclamation.

On motion of Mr. Thompson, the officers elect were requested to present themselves for the purpose of being sworn in;

Whereupon, Messrs. Gibbs, Babcock, L. Harrison, and Thomas appeared and were duly sworn by Judge White.

On motion of Mr. Thompson, the Senate adjourned to 10 o'clock to-morrow morning.

WEDNESDAY, January 8, 1879.

Senate met pursuant to adjournment.

The President in the chair.

The roll was called and the following members answered to their names:

Messrs. Barnes, Bryson, Durkee, French, Genova, Hagan, Hatcher, Johnson, Judge, Leslie, Long, Lykes, McAuley, McMeekin, McKinnon, Meacham, Niblack, Orman, Patterson, Speer, Walker, and Walls—22.

A quorum present.

The Rev. Dr. Harrison officiated as Chaplain.

The journal was read, corrected, and approved.

On motion of Mr. Lykes, Messrs. Allen of the 24th District, and Lee of the 21st District, appeared and were sworn.

Mr. French offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the President of the Senate appoint a standing committee of five members on Immigration.

Mr. Lykes suggested that permanent rules be adopted for the government of the Senate.

Mr. Barnes offered the following substitute for Mr. French's resolution:

Resolved, That the rules of the Senate be so amended as to include among the standing committees a Committee on Immigration;

Which was accepted and adopted.

Mr. Walls moved that a committee of three be appointed to wait on His Excellency, the Governor, and notify him that the Senate is organized and ready for business;

Which was agreed to, and Messrs. Barnes, Niblack, and Walls appointed said committee.

Mr. Meacham moved that a committee of three be appointed to wait upon the Assembly for the same purpose;

Which was agreed to, and Messrs. Lykes, Meacham, and McClenny appointed said committee.

The committee appointed to wait on the Governor returned and reported that they had performed their duty and were discharged.

The President announced the following Standing Committees:

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE.

Judiciary Committee:

Mr. BARNES, Chairman.
Messrs. NIBLACK, THOMPSON,
BRYSON, DURKEE.

Privileges and Elections:

Mr. WALKER of 23d Dist., Chairman.
Messrs. BARNES, WALKER of 6th Dist.,
NIBLACK, LONG.

Education:

Mr. JUDGE, Chairman.
Messrs. McMEEKIN, WALKER of 6th Dist.,
FRENCH, DURKEE.

Claims:

Mr. GENOVAR, Chairman.
Messrs. PATTERSON, SPEER,
LESLIE, JONES of 8th Dist.

Railroads and Telegraphs:

Mr. NIBLACK, Chairman.
Messrs. THOMPSON, LYKES,
BARNES, DURKEE.

Public Lands:

Mr. ORMAN, Chairman.
Messrs. FRENCH, HAGAN,
McCLENNY, MEACHAM.

Appropriations:

Mr. LYKES, Chairman.
Messrs. McKINNON, RICHARD,
JONES of Levy, JONES of 8th Dist.

Finance and Taxation:

Mr. McKINNON, Chairman.
Messrs. McCLENNY, NIBLACK,
LESLIE, ALLEN.

Public Printing:

Mr. RICHARD, Chairman.
Messrs. McGUIRE, LEE,
THOMPSON, WALLS.

Enrolled Bills:

Mr. WALKER of 6th Dist., Chairman.
Messrs. McKINNON, ORMAN,
GENOVAR, JOHNSON.

Agriculture:

Mr. McMEEKIN, Chairman.
Messrs. HAGAN, PATTERSON,
SPEER, HATCHER.

Fisheries:

Mr. ORMAN, Chairman.
Messrs. JONES of Levy, THOMPSON,
McGUIRE, ALLEN.

State Boundaries:

Mr. PATTERSON, Chairman.
Messrs. THOMPSON, McGUIRE,
McCLENNY, MEACHAM.

Engrossed Bills:

Mr. BRYSON, Chairman.
Messrs. JUDGE, JOHNSON,
SPEER, LONG.

State Affairs:

Mr. LESLIE, Chairman.
Messrs. LEE, McAULEY,
McGUIRE, WALLS.

Corporations:

Mr. THOMPSON, Chairman.
Messrs. McGUIRE, LESLIE,
GENOVAR, DURKEE.

City and County Organizations:

Mr. JONES of Levy, Chairman.
Messrs. FRENCH, McAULEY,
McCLENNY, LONG.

Militia:

Mr. McGUIRE, Chairman.
Messrs. RICHARD, LEE,
SPEER, WALLS.

Legislative Expenses:

Mr. SPEER, Chairman.
Messrs. LYKES, BRYSON,
HATCHER, JONES of 8th Dist.

Indian Affairs:

Mr. HAGAN, Chairman.
Messrs. LESLIE, JOHNSON,
PATTERSON, ALLEN.

Commerce and Navigation:

Mr. McCLENNY, Chairman.
Messrs. LYKES, GENOVAR,
McGUIRE, DURKEE.

Immigration:

Mr. FRENCH, Chairman.
Messrs. BARNES, McCLENNY,
LYKES, DURKEE.

Mr. McKinnon moved that 100 copies each of the Rules and Standing Committees of the Senate be printed for the use of the Senate;

Which was adopted.

RULES AND ORDERS OF THE SENATE.

RULE 1. The President shall take the chair every day at the hour to which the Senate shall have adjourned; shall call the Senate to order, and, on the appearance of a quorum, shall cause the Journal of the preceding day to be read.

RULE 2. He shall preserve order and decorum; may speak to points of order in preference to other members, and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal. He shall rise to put a question or to address the Senate, but may read sitting.

RULE 3. He shall declare all votes, but if any member rises to doubt a vote, the President shall order a return of the number voting in the affirmative and the negative, without any further debate.

RULE 4. When any member shall require a question to be determined by yeas and nays, the President shall take the sense of the House in that manner, provided that any three of the members present are in favor of it.

RULE 5. When a question is under debate, the President shall receive no motion but to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone to a day certain, to commit, to amend, or to postpone indefinitely, which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they stand arranged; and a motion to adjourn and to lay on the table shall be decided without debate.

RULE 6. When two or more members rise at once, the President shall name the member who is to speak first.

RULE 7. The President shall have the right to name a member to perform the duties of the chair, but such substitution shall not extend beyond an adjournment.

RULE 8. The Senate, immediately after organization, shall elect a President *pro tem.*, who shall preside over the Senate at any time during the session, when the Lieutenant-Governor may be absent.

RULE 9. Every member, when he speaks, shall stand in his place, and address the President, and when he has done speaking shall sit down.

RULE 10. No member shall speak more than once on one question, to the prevention of any other who has not spoken and is desirous to speak, nor more than twice without obtaining leave of the House.

RULE 11. No member speaking shall be interrupted by another, but by rising up to call to order, or a question of privilege.

RULE 12. After a question is put to vote, no member shall speak to it.

RULE 13. Every member presenting a petition, memorial, or remonstrance, shall endorse his name thereon.

RULE 14. Every motion shall be received and considered, and shall be reduced to writing if the President directs it.

RULE 15. When a vote has passed, and it shall be in order for any member voting in the majority to move a reconsideration thereof on the same or the succeeding day, and such motion (except in the last week of the session) shall be placed first in the orders of the day for the day succeeding that on which the motion is made; and when a motion for reconsideration is decided, that vote shall not be reconsidered.

RULE 16. A question containing two or more propositions, capable of division, shall be divided whenever desired by any member. A motion to strike out and insert shall be deemed indivisible; but a motion to strike out being lost, shall neither preclude amendment nor a motion to strike out and insert.

RULE 17. The unfinished business in which the Senate was engaged at the time of the last adjournment shall have the preference in the orders of the day, and all bills or resolutions upon the calendar at the day of adjournment, *sine die*, shall be taken up in their regular order at the commencement of the next regular session of the same Legislature.

RULE 18. The rules and proceedings of the Senate shall be observed, as far as they are practicable, in committee of the whole, excepting that a member may speak oftener than twice on the same subject. In committee of the whole the previous question cannot be called, the yeas and nays required, nor can there be an appeal from the decision of the Chair.

RULE 19. No member shall absent himself from the Senate without leave.

RULE 20. Whenever a question shall be taken by yeas and nays, the Secretary shall call the names of all the members, except the President, in alphabetical order, and every member present shall answer to his name unless excused; and no member shall be permitted, under any circumstances, to vote after the decision is announced from the Chair.

RULE 21. The following standing committees shall be appointed at the commencement of the first session, to-wit:

- A Committee on the Judiciary.
 - A Committee on Education.
 - A Committee on Finance and Taxation.
 - A Committee on Claims.
 - A Committee on Corporations.
 - A Committee on City and County Organizations.
 - A Committee on the Militia.
 - A Committee on Legislative Expenses.
 - A Committee on Agriculture.
 - A Committee on Public Printing.
 - A Committee on Enrolled Bills.
 - A Committee on Engrossed Bills.
 - A Committee on State Affairs.
 - A Committee on Railroads and Telegraphs.
 - A Committee on Public Lands.
 - A Committee on Privileges and Elections.
 - A Committee on Appropriations.
 - A Committee on Fisheries.
 - A Committee on Indian Affairs.
 - A Committee on State Boundaries.
 - A Committee on Commerce and Navigation.
 - A Committee on Immigration.
- And each of these committees shall consist of five members.
- RULE 22. All committees shall be appointed by the Presi-

dent, unless otherwise specially directed by the Senate, and the person first named shall be chairman; and whenever a member of a committee shall be absent, and a substitute shall be appointed, the substitute shall hold the same rank in the committee as the member held for whom he is substituted. In all elections of committees by ballot, the person having the highest number of votes shall act as chairman.

RULE 23. No bill or resolve shall be introduced by a member without special leave; and all bills and resolves, when so introduced, shall be committed before they are passed to a second reading.

RULE 24. No bill or resolve shall pass to be engrossed without two several readings on two separate days.

RULE 25. All bills and resolves after a second reading shall be committed to the Standing Committee on Engrossed Bills, whose duty it shall be to strictly examine the same, and if found by them to be rightly and truly engrossed they shall so endorse on the envelope thereof.

RULE 26. No engrossed bills or resolves shall be amended without the unanimous consent of the members present.

RULE 27. All bills and resolutions shall be put upon the calendar, and shall be taken up on their various readings only in regular order.

RULE 28. Messages shall be sent to the Assembly by the Secretary, who shall previously endorse the final determination of the Senate thereon.

RULE 29. No bill, order, resolution or other matter for the use of the Senate shall be printed without the special order of the Senate.

RULE 30. No person not a member of the Senate shall be allowed inside the bar while the Senate is in session, except the Governor, his Cabinet officers, members of the Assembly and Judges of the Supreme and Circuit Courts, except by invitation of the President, or a majority of the members present.

RULE 31. The rules of parliamentary practice comprised in Jefferson's Manual shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Standing Rules and Orders of the Senate, or the Joint Rules of the two branches of the Legislature.

RULE 32. The following shall be the hours of the daily session of the Senate, unless otherwise ordered: 10 A. M. and 4 P. M.

RULE 23. Any rule or order may be altered, dispensed with or rescinded, by a two-thirds vote of the members present consenting thereto.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Reading of the Journal.
 Introduction of Resolutions, Petitions and Memorials.
 Introduction of Bills.
 Consideration of Resolutions.
 Messages from the Assembly.
 Reports of Committees.
 Orders of the Day.
 Consideration of Bills upon their Second Reading.
 Consideration of Bills upon their Third Reading.
 Executive Appointments.

RULES GOVERNING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS.

RULE 1. When nominations shall be made by the Governor to the Senate, they shall, unless otherwise ordered by the Senate, lay over for action until the day succeeding the day upon which they were made; and the final question on every nomination shall be: "Will the Senate advise and consent to this nomination?" Which question shall not be put on the same day on which the nomination is received.

RULE 2. Nominations neither approved nor rejected during the session at which they are made, shall not be acted upon at any succeeding session without being again made by the Governor; and if the Senate shall adjourn *sine die*, all nominations pending and not finally acted upon at the time of taking such adjournment, shall be returned to the Governor, and shall not be acted upon afterwards, unless again submitted to the Senate by the Governor; and all motions pending to reconsider a vote upon a nomination shall fall on such adjournment.

RULE 3. All information or remarks concerning the character or qualifications, or the vote upon the confirmation of any person nominated by the Governor to office, shall be kept a secret; but the fact that a nomination has been made shall not be regarded as a secret after the time has expired when a motion to reconsider may be made, and it shall be considered a breach of privilege for any Senator to break this rule.

RULE 4. When acting on Executive business, the Chamber shall be cleared of all persons except the Secretary of the Senate, who shall be sworn to keep the secrets of the Senate.

RULE 5. The Legislative proceedings and the Executive proceedings of the Senate shall be kept in separate books.

RULE 6. Nominations approved or definitely acted upon by the Senate, shall not be returned by the Secretary of the Senate to the Governor until the expiration of the time limited for

making a motion to reconsider the same, or while a motion to reconsider is pending, unless otherwise ordered by the Senate.

RULE 7. No transcript of the Executive record shall be furnished unless by special order of the Senate.

RULE 8. All confidential communications made by the Governor shall be by the members and officers of the Senate kept secret.

JOINT RULES.

While bills are on their passage between the two houses, they shall be on paper and under signature of the Secretary or Clerk of each house respectively.

After a bill shall have passed both houses, it shall be duly enrolled on parchment by the Clerk of the Assembly or Secretary of the Senate, as the bill may have originated in the one or the other house, before it shall be presented to the Governor of the State.

When bills are enrolled they shall be examined by a Joint Committee of two from the Senate and two from the Assembly, appointed as a standing committee for that purpose, who shall carefully compare the enrollment with the engrossed bills as passed in the two houses, and, correcting any errors that may be discovered in the enrolled bills, make their report forthwith to their respective houses.

After examination and report, each bill shall be signed in the respective houses, first by the Speaker of the Assembly, then by the President of the Senate.

After a bill shall have been thus signed in each house, it shall be presented by the said committee to the Governor of the State for his approbation, it being first endorsed on the back of the roll, certifying in which house the same originated, which indorsement shall be signed by the Secretary or Clerk, as the case may be, of the house in which it did originate, and shall be entered on the journal of each house. The said committee shall report the day of presentation to the Governor, which time shall also be carefully entered on the journal of each house.

All orders, resolutions and votes, which are to be presented to the Governor of the State for his approbation, shall also in the same manner be previously enrolled, examined and signed, and shall be presented in the same manner and by the same committee as provided in cases of bills.

Mr. Thompson offered the following joint resolution:

WHEREAS, The compensation now allowed jurors and witnesses is insufficient, and in many cases works a hardship upon many poor people of our State; therefore,

Be it resolved, That a joint committee of three from the Senate and five from the Assembly be appointed, with instructions to take up what is known as the Fee Bill, and make such alterations and amendments as in their judgment are necessary, and report by bill or otherwise;

Which was adopted.

Messrs. Thompson, Barnes and McMeekin were appointed the committee on the part of the Senate.

Mr. McKinnon presented the petition of W. H. Sharp, of Brevard county;

Which was referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The committee appointed to wait on the Assembly reported that they had performed that duty, and were discharged.

On motion of Mr. Meacham, the Senate adjourned until 4 o'clock P. M.

FOUR O'CLOCK, P. M.

The Senate resumed its session.

The President in the Chair.

The roll was called, and the following Senators answered to their names:

Mr. President, Messrs. Allen, Barnes, Bryson, Durkee, French, Genova, Hagan, Hatcher, Johnson, Jones of the 8th, Judge, Lee, Leslie, Long, Lykes, McAuley, McClenny, McMeekin, McKinnon, Meacham, Niblack, Orman, Richard, Speer, Thompson, Walker of the 23rd and Walls—28.

A quorum present.

A committee from Assembly appeared, and reported that their body was organized and ready for business.

The Private Secretary of the Governor appeared with the following message:

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
TALLAHASSEE, January 8, 1879. }

Gentlemen of the Senate and Assembly:

It affords me much pleasure to welcome you to the Capital; and you may rest assured that in all your endeavors to promote the welfare of the people and advance the material interests of the State, you shall have my hearty co-operation. Your duties and responsibilities are great, and you have been invested with power and authority which should be used for the benefit and for the honor of all, without regard to locality, race, or political affiliation. I sincerely trust that your session will be characterized by peace, concord and wisdom, and that your legislation will be such as to make you merit the blessings of God and the thanks of the people you represent.

Many of our sister States have suffered severely from the yellow fever, but Florida has been spared, and for this, for our abundant harvest, decreasing taxation, improved educational advantages, exemption from civil strife, and other evidences of public and private welfare, we have much cause for gratitude and thanks to a merciful Providence.

The total floating indebtedness of the State, January 1st, 1877, was.. \$249,788 41
Of this amount there has been paid by the present Administration.. 184,215 60

Leaving a floating indebtedness against the State for claims which accrued prior to January 1st, 1877, of..... \$65,572 81

This indebtedness consists of the following items:

Juror and witness scrip issued prior to January 1st, 1877.....	\$44,706 15
Other expenses.....	2,945 75
Floating debt, reported by Comptroller Cowgill.....	7,932 91
Greenback scrip in circulation in excess of amount reported.....	9,986 00
The deficiency for 1877 is.....	\$18,828 60
The deficiency for 1878 is.....	22,756 46
There is now of Comptroller's Warrants and Treasurer's Certificates, issued during the years 1877-8, outstanding.....	\$10,905 04

This does not include an unknown amount of greenback scrip in the hands of the people.

The current expenses of the State for 1877 were \$212,530.31, and for 1878, \$133,970.36.

The bonded debt of the State is as follows:

Bonds of 1871.....	\$350 000 00
Bonds of 1873.....	925,000 00
Bonds of 1857, with interest to 1874, held by private parties	8,200 00
Convention bonds	1,000 00

Total Bonds\$1,284,200 00

Of this bonded indebtedness there is

In the Agricultural College Fund.....	\$106,300 00
In the School Fund	234,500 00
In the Seminary Fund.....	83,400 00
In the Sinking Funds.....	143,900 00—\$568,100 00

Leaving in the hands of private parties.....\$716,100 00

The bonded debt has been decreased \$21,400 within the past two years.

There is now held by the Indian Trust Fund, bonds of 1857, amounting to \$132,000, with interest. The State has unadjusted claims against the General Government, which are now in a process of settlement, and it is confidently expected that these claims will be amply sufficient to cover the bonds now held by the Indian Trust Fund.

For a more extensive statement upon all the matters pertaining to finance, I refer you to the reports of the Comptroller and Treasurer.

ENGRAVED COMPTROLLER'S WARRANTS.

The late Treasurer Foster turned over to his successor, in engraved Comptroller's warrants, known as greenback scrip, \$58,485.14. This, as appears by the report of the late Comptroller Cowgill, exceeds the authorized issue to the amount of \$21,315. He also refers to an unknown quantity outstanding in the hands of the public. Since that time there has been funded, of this greenback scrip, \$22,000 in the bonds of 1873, and the scrip destroyed. There is now in the Treasury \$45,213, and \$1,258 known to be out, which has been examined and registered. To these amounts add the amount funded in bonds of 1873, which makes \$68,471; deducting from that \$58,485, received from the State Treasurer, leaves \$9,986;

adding to this amount \$21,315, separated by the late Comptroller as having been issued in excess of what should be properly outstanding—it appears there has been improperly in circulation, \$31,301. There is still an unknown quantity in the hands of the people. No clue has been discovered to the origin of this grave irregularity. I would respectfully suggest that a committee be appointed to examine into this matter. Also, I would recommend that the greenback scrip now in the hands of the State Treasurer be immediately canceled.

In my last annual message to the Legislature, attention was called to that portion of Comptroller Cowgill's report referring to a discrepancy between the amount of engraved Comptroller's warrants received by R. H. Gamble, as previous Comptroller, to be exchanged by him for written Comptroller's warrants and Treasury certificates, and the amount of written warrants and certificates so exchanged.

Acting under a request in my message, committees were appointed by both branches of the Legislature to investigate this matter, with full powers to make the investigation thorough. These committees made full reports, which may be found in the Journals of that session. From these reports it will be seen that while there was no record evidence of such exchanges, there was other and sufficient evidence to convince the committees that the exchanges had been regularly and fully made as required by the law.

Comptroller Cowgill reported that there were \$39,087 of engraved warrants of which there was no record evidence of exchange, and that there were \$39,253 of written warrants and Treasury certificates that might have been exchanged, and which were then outstanding and had never been presented for payment.

When it is remembered that seven years have elapsed since these exchanges took place, that Comptroller Cowgill used all means to discover the existence of the written warrants and certificates, and that they are still outstanding, the correctness of the committee's conclusions must be apparent, and that the State has suffered no wrong; and justice to a faithful public officer demands that I should make this communication in the same way in which your attention was called to the subject.

LANDS SOLD FOR TAXES.

In 1877 a law was passed allowing those whose lands had been sold for taxes and bought in by the State and county until January 1, 1879, to redeem the same, without being subjected to any penalties for such delinquency. The object of this law was undoubtedly to enable those who had been unfortunate, and whose property had been sold to the State or county, to become repossessed of their lands, and thereby cause this species of property to become a source of revenue to the State. I regret to say that but comparatively few have availed themselves of this liberal opportunity. It therefore devolves upon you to determine what is to be done upon this subject.

SUSPENSION OF TAXES.

The Legislature of 1877, although desirous of reducing the burthen of taxation, could not accurately estimate what saving would result from their legislation, and not being able to agree as to the amount to which the taxes could be reduced, adjourned without making any reduction in the rate of taxation. Sympathizing with the people in the heavy burthens they were called upon to bear as a legacy of former administrations, and having ascertained from the Comptroller and Treasurer that there would be sufficient funds in the State Treasury to meet all the necessary requirements of the Government in accordance with the appropriations, and in view of the fact that the Constitution requires that "the Legislature shall provide for raising revenue sufficient to defray the expenses of the State," after consultation with the members of the cabinet, on the 7th day of October, A. D. 1877, I directed the Comptroller to order the Collectors of Revenue of the different counties throughout the State to suspend the collection of a portion of the taxes for that year, to-wit: one mill on the dollar for the tax to pay appropriations for 1877, generally known as the State Tax proper; one mill on the dollar of the tax levied to pay the interest on, and for the ultimate redemption of the State Bonds of 1873, called the General Sinking Fund Tax; and the tax to pay the interest upon and form a Sinking Fund, for the redemption of the Bonds of 1871, known as the Special Sinking Fund Tax, was made uniform through-

out the State by being placed at one mill on the dollar, making a reduction of the State Tax for 1877 of about two and a half mills on the dollar. This resulted in a saving to the people of \$77,245.00. In the year 1878, seeing that another and further reduction of the State taxes could be made without injury or detriment to the credit of the State, or violation of the Constitution, I, on the 17th of August, 1878, directed the Comptroller to order the Collectors of Revenue to suspend the collection of two mills on the dollar of the State Tax proper; one mill of the General Sinking Fund Tax; and the Special Sinking Fund tax was again made uniform at the rate of one mill on the dollar, making a reduction of about three and a half mills upon the dollar of taxes for 1878. This saved to the tax payers the sum of \$103,149. The amounts saved to the people of the State of Florida by the suspension of the above mentioned portions of the taxes for 1877 and 1878, aggregate about \$180,394. I now respectfully request that you legalize the above action by legislative enactment.

UNIFORMITY OF TAXATION.

This, in my opinion, is one of the most important questions you have to deal with. It is naturally the desire of all that the taxes should be reduced to the lowest figure possible. But a certain amount of revenue has to be raised annually to meet the expenses of the government and to pay the interest on our bonded indebtedness. To distribute this burden equally amongst all the tax-payers of the State should be the desire and aim of all lovers of a fair and impartial government. The present revenue laws of this State do not seem to fully meet these requirements. Under the present system of assessment, a great deal of property is assessed at a greatly less valuation than the "usual selling price" the annual crop would sell for in the market, and in some instances at less than half the value of the crop, and scarcely one-tenth of what the owner would demand for the property were he to offer it for sale. This is a great injustice to those tax-payers who return their property to the assessors at a legal and just valuation. This difficulty seems to exist in other communities as well as ours; and different States have adopted different methods to remedy the

evil. Some have adopted the plan of having appraisers accompany the assessors and require them to visit and examine in person every piece of real estate, make diligent inquiries about all personal property, and to make an appraisal of all such real and personal property to the best of their judgment. Other States have adopted other measures, but all tending to the same end, namely, to ascertain the true value of all property. The State of Kentucky has adopted the plan of providing the tax assessors with suitable blanks, under proper headings, who furnish one of these blanks to each tax-payer, requiring him to make out a complete schedule of all his property, real, personal and mixed. Upon these blanks are printed certain questions to be asked by the assessor and answered by the tax-payer. An oath is appended to this blank, and when the proper answers to the questions have been given and entered upon these blanks in their proper columns, the tax-payer is required to subscribe thereto, after having it read to him by the assessor. These lists are then filed with certain county officers, subject to examination and inspection by the grand juries, or any citizen, thus furnishing ready proof if any tax-payer should perjure himself. From these lists the assessor makes up his tax books. I understand that this mode of assessment increased the assessed value of the taxable property of Kentucky more than 20 per cent. the first year after its adoption. It is thought by many, competent to judge, that if this plan were adopted by this State, it would increase the valuation of the property in a great degree. The valuation of taxable property in the State, as returned by the assessors for 1878, was about \$29,250,000. This valuation is the basis for taxation. If the plan mentioned above, or some other feasible and simple one, were adopted, by means of which something nearer the true value of the taxable property could be reached, the assessed value of our taxable property would be greatly increased, and the rate of taxation could be very much reduced, the true condition of the State would appear, and those desiring to make their homes in Florida would not be deterred on account of high taxation.

LICENSES.

Before leaving the subject of taxation I would call your attention to the manner of issuing licenses to such persons who are required by law to pay a license tax. The collection of this license tax could be greatly simplified by having all licenses to expire on a certain day to be fixed by law, permitting those who desire to procure a license before the expiration of the year to pay a pro rata amount of the annual license, according to the length of time intervening between the date of the license and the expiration of the license year; this would save Collectors of Revenue much trouble and be an improvement upon the present system. It has been suggested by several persons, that our license laws be so amended as to place the issuing of licenses in the hands of the County Commissioners, who could have the supervision over and prevent the issuance of certain licenses to improper and immoral persons, and to require persons who apply for a license for certain occupations to give a pledge-bond to keep peaceable and respectable places of business. The subject is worthy of grave consideration.

COMMON SCHOOLS.

I can but congratulate the citizens of the State upon the present condition of our public schools, and the progress which, as shown by the accompanying report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, has been made during the past two years.

Since the security of our government rests upon the mental and moral enlightenment of its citizens, it is one of the first duties of the statesman to foster and encourage every object which tends to this end. Experience proves that a system of public schools supported by the State is the most efficient means of reaching the minds of the masses. Any measure, therefore, which it is believed will invigorate and strengthen this department of our government should receive most serious consideration.

The question as to the propriety of giving instruction in the higher branches in schools supported at the public expense, is at this time attracting considerable attention in some of the States. Taking into consideration the partially developed condition of our system, the conclusion forces itself upon us, that

it is our first duty to establish and put in operation good and efficient common schools. I would respectfully recommend, therefore, a change in the law limiting the public school instruction to the common school branches as suggested in the Superintendent's report.

One of the defects of our common school system before alluded to is the tendency in its practical workings to draw an undue portion of the funds to the towns and more densely populated localities, to the exclusion of the remote and sparsely settled sections. The division of the counties into small districts, the plan at that time under consideration to correct this evil, has since been found to be impracticable on account of our unequally distributed population. While it works well in the older States, and would doubtless result in advantage to the more populous portions of ours, yet as a rule it could not be successfully carried out. I think, however, the change above recommended of limiting to the elementary branches would be a step in this direction, for, as is generally known, the authorities have been led to make the unjust distribution complained of in order to foster the high schools in the towns. This change, and a rigid enforcement of the law of apportionment as it now stands, are all, in my judgment, necessary upon this point.

At the time of the report of the former Superintendent made December the 31st, 1876, returns from only thirty-three of the counties were on file in the office of the Department. Since that time the records from all except one have been received, and show an increase in the scholastic population of nearly fourteen thousand.

For the past year our State received from the Peabody Fund \$3,900, which was applied as stated in the report. The amount, it will be noticed, is considerably less than that allowed us for the preceding year. This, however, is not due to any apprehension of the Trustees that our public schools are not receiving proper encouragement, but from the fact that there has been a falling off in the income of the Fund.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

At your last session I recommended that a committee be appointed to investigate the action of the old Board of Trustees

with reference to the location of the College, to ascertain if the law had been complied with in that particular. Upon this suggestion an act was passed creating a new Board of Corporators to take charge of the Fund, and to remove the College to some more central and accessible point.

On account of a litigation which followed as to the right of possession, and which continued for some time, but little has been done by the new Board of Trustees. As to their action, however, in regard to changing the location of the institution, I would refer you to the appendix to the Superintendent's report, in which an account of their proceedings is given. I would also call to your favorable consideration the remarks made by the Superintendent in relation to this and the Seminary fund.

In reviewing this subject, I feel that as much has been done during the present administration as even the most sanguine could have expected. Our schools have been increased several hundred, a large number of children has been enrolled, and a longer school term been given, and at the same time, better teachers employed than ever before since the organization of the system. These facts are all set forth in the Superintendent's report, and are worthy of careful attention.

PENITENTIARY.

In accordance with an act of the Legislature, approved March 3d, 1877, the Adjutant-General was authorized to hire out the convicts then in the Penitentiary, and such others as should be sentenced to that institution during the time the contract might be in force. Agreeably to that law, the Adjutant-General advertised for proposals to lease the convicts for a term of two years. Three bids were received, and the one most favorable to the State was accepted. By the terms of this bid, the contractors, after giving bonds for the faithful performance of their contracts, were to have all the prisoners then in the State Prison, or out at work under contract, and all others that should be sentenced to the State Prison during the term of their lease, upon the condition that the State would pay to the contractors three thousand dollars the first year, and two thousand dollars the second year, the State paying all

expenses of transportation of prisoners from the respective jails to the convicts' camp. The contractors having given the necessary bond the 6th March, 1877, the convicts then in hand were turned over to them, and since that time all who have been convicted in the Circuit Courts and sentenced to the State Prison, have been delivered to them as speedily as possible. The cost to the State of the convicts for 1877 was as follows :

For expenses of Penitentiary before the convicts were leased to contractors.....	\$1,841 52
Amount paid to contractor as per agreement.....	3,000 00
Amount paid for transportation and sheriffs' fees and guards.....	3,159 10
Total cost for 1877.....	\$8,000 62

For the year 1878 the cost of the State Prison has been as follows :

For amount paid contractor as per agreement.....	\$2,000 00
For transportation of convicts, sheriffs' fees, expenses of guard and incidental expenses.....	4,591 03
Total cost for 1878.....	\$6,591 03

By direction of the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions, on the 22d day of October, 1878, the Adjutant-General advertised for bids to lease convicts for the term commencing March 6, 1879, and ending January 1, 1881. Several bids were received. On the 15th December the bids were opened, and as none of them were satisfactory to the Board, the Adjutant-General was instructed to continue the advertisement until January 1, 1879. This was done, and on the 2d instant the bids were opened, and the one by which the State would be relieved of all expenses connected with the State Prison was accepted. This bid is as follows :

After giving good and sufficient bond for the faithful performance of the contract, the contractor to receive all convicts now on hand at his camp, and to take all others that may be convicted during the term of his lease at the county jails of the respective counties, and to pay all expense of guards and transportation, and to pay the State one hundred dollars per annum. This will be a great saving to the State, and I trust be as conducive to the health and comfort of the convicts as possible. Below you will find an exhibit of the annual ex-

pense this class of people have been to the State during the past four years :

For 1875.....	\$39,769 99	For 1877.....	\$3,000 62
For 1876.....	21,638 06	For 1878.....	4,591 03

And if the contractor, whose bid for leasing the convicts for 1879 and 1880, gives a good and sufficient bond, the State, for the next two years, will be at no expense whatever on this account.

For a detailed statement of the management of the State Prison, and for the general working of this law, I refer you to the report of the Adjutant-General.

ASYLUM.

By an act of the last Legislature, the buildings formerly occupied as a State Prison were ordered to be converted into an Asylum for the indigent insane of the State, and the sum of three thousand dollars was appropriated to put said buildings in a proper condition and furnish them. Accordingly, the Adjutant-General commenced making the necessary changes, but it was soon found that the amount appropriated was inadequate to complete the work and enable him to carry out the beneficent designs of the law. Under the circumstances, it was desirable that the buildings be completed at as early a day as possible. Accordingly, the Adjutant-General was allowed to draw upon an unexpended balance then belonging to the Penitentiary, rather than go into the market and borrow at a high rate of interest, to finish paying for the work which had to be done to put the Asylum in a fit condition to receive patients. The Asylum was ready for the reception of lunatics about April 1, 1877, when patients were placed in the institution, and since that time the number has been constantly increasing, the whole number admitted into the Asylum since it was opened being 86, of which 34 are white males, 24 are white females, 13 are colored females and 15 are colored males. There were receiving support from the State, December 31, 1876, 45. There were received at the Asylum during the years 1877 and 1878, 90. Of this number 12 have died and 19 have been discharged, leaving now in the Asylum 55. In addition to these, there are now in the hands of private parties receiving support from the State 49, making a total of 104 of this unfortunate class de-

pending upon the State for support. This shows an increase of over one hundred per cent. in the past two years. Should this increase continue, it will be necessary to make additional improvements at the Asylum. For a detailed statement of the improvements made and those which it will be necessary to make, I respectfully refer you to the Adjutant-General.

It has been more expensive to maintain this institution than was expected, partly owing to the fact that there were more indigent lunatics in the State than the Legislature was aware of, and because more was required to be done to make these poor people comfortable than was first contemplated, therefore the appropriations made in 1877 for that purpose were exhausted by October 1, 1877. Under instructions from the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions, I borrowed enough money to defray the expenses of the Asylum for the remainder of the year 1877.

After the appropriation for the maintenance of lunatics for 1877 was exhausted, it was thought best for those who had charge of lunatics at home, and who, under the law, were allowed to have a certain amount, not to exceed one hundred and fifty dollars per annum, for their support, to hold their claims and await the action of the Legislature. I would therefore recommend that an amount sufficient to cover those deferred claims, and to pay the amount borrowed by me to carry on the Asylum the latter part of 1877, be appropriated. For the amount of those deficiencies I refer you to the report of the Comptroller.

I would respectfully suggest that you take into consideration the propriety of repealing that portion of the law which allows it to be optional with persons to keep their indigent insane at home and receive one hundred and fifty dollars per annum or to send them to the Asylum. In my opinion this unfortunate class of individuals would be far better off at the Asylum, where they would receive proper nursing and be under the care of a physician. If this was done, doubtless cures could be effected in many instances, and the proper authorities would always know that those who were receiving support from the State as lunatics were really entitled to it. Before leaving this subject, I would also suggest that some advantage

might possibly result to this institution and make it less expensive to the State, if the law was so amended as to allow patients to be received into the Asylum whose friends, guardians or relations were able to pay for their care and maintenance. Under existing statutes none can be taken into the Asylum unless they are indigent.

LANDS AND IMMIGRATION.

The Commissioner has made a lucid and exhaustive report upon all the matters coming under his department, which I respectfully refer to you for information upon these subjects. You will perceive from his report that the sales of land have increased during the past two years by several thousands of dollars over the two preceding years, notwithstanding the general depression of business, thus showing that immigration has been gradually upon the increase, though not in very large numbers at any one period.

BOARD OF IMMIGRATION.

Though this Board has but a limited amount of funds under its control, its usefulness has nevertheless been felt. I refer you to the report of the President for what has been done to induce immigration.

ELECTIONS.

As our present laws relating to elections and registration of electors do not seem to be entirely free from faults, I would respectfully call your attention to them, and trust that in your wisdom you may be able to make such amendments as will prevent in the future all illegal voting and frauds of any nature whatsoever in elections. I respectfully call your attention to the report of the Attorney-General both upon this and other subjects discussed by him.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

Many letters having been received at the different departments of our State Government from parties desirous of coming to Florida who wished to know something reliable as to our productions and resources before permanently settling, and who wanted printed statistical information, we have been compelled to inform them that no reliable information of this nature had ever been compiled. Seeing the necessity of such

statistics, after consultation with members of the Cabinet, it was decided to get up a blank book with all the possible productions of the State arranged under the proper headings, and to send them to the assessors of taxes of each county and request them to collect all the information possible, and when the books were finished to return them to my office. I am glad to say that nearly every assessor in the State complied with my request and has furnished a large amount of valuable information that heretofore has been inaccessible. I have had these books compiled, and the result will be submitted in a subsequent report. As there were no moneys appropriated from which to pay the assessors for this work, I could only promise to call the matter to your attention and recommend that you make a special appropriation for this purpose, giving to each assessor a compensation commensurate with the work done, and I would suggest that you amend the law defining the duties of assessors of taxes, and require them in the future to collect this statistical information while they are going their rounds assessing taxes, and compile it in a separate book, and when completed to forward the same to some one of the officers of the Cabinet to arrange and have printed in the proper manner. This would furnish a fund of information that would be exceedingly valuable, and would enable us to accurately estimate each year the increase in our agricultural, horticultural and pomological productions.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

A wise legislation for the encouragement of enterprises for the construction of railroads and canals, with grants of unoccupied and now unproductive lands, is not only a public necessity, but would do much towards enhancing the value of the remaining land and would promote the interests of the State in every locality.

The passage of a general and popular system of cheap and rapid means of transportation of any kind whatever throughout our State, so that the people could have an easy outlet to market for their surplus and perishable productions, is very desirable. This is the surest means of promoting immigration to the now neglected portions of our State, and as it is true

that the burden of taxation diminishes in the ratio that the wealth of the State increases, it seems the dictate of wisdom and sound policy to encourage and foster such improvements.

ROADS AND ROAD LAWS.

In a previous message I called the attention of the Legislature to some of the defects in our Road Laws; amendments were effected, but faults still exist and many complaints are made against the working of the present system of Road Laws. Good roads tend to increase travel, facilitate the transportation of goods, merchandise, the products of the country, and benefit every class of citizens. I would therefore recommend, that the laws of this character be changed so as to make it a misdemeanor for failure to do road duty when properly notified, punishable in such manner as the Legislature may specify.

SEMINOLE WAR CLAIMS.

By an act of the last Legislature, I was authorized to appoint an agent to adjust and settle all claims between the State of Florida and the United States, growing out of the Seminole war. Accordingly, last August, I appointed Col. W. K. Beard as such agent, on the part of the State, to ascertain the amount due from the United States to this State on the account of such military service. He has collected quite a large amount of documentary evidence, and has done all he could without visiting Washington and procuring some further information from the War Department. As the State has an agent there attending to other claims, I advised Col. Beard to communicate with him and get him to obtain such information as he needed. He accordingly wrote the State agent to procure the information for him and he is looking for it to come at any time. When it arrives he will make his report to the Legislature.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

True economy would dictate that we should preserve our public buildings. I would most respectfully suggest that you make an appropriation sufficient to put the Capitol in repair. The Adjutant General has, in his report, mentioned the improvement he deems necessary, but there are some items that I think worthy of calling to your special attention. The

Treasurer has at all times a large amount of securities in his safes, which, in case of the Capitol being burned, would probably be destroyed. I would respectfully suggest, that in addition to the appropriations you make to put the Capitol in repair, you add an amount sufficient to build vaults of brick, with suitable iron doors, to receive the Treasurer's safes. I would also suggest that it would be proper to have the Capitol and Asylum insured.

REWARDS.

No appropriation was made by the last Legislature for rewards for fugitives from justice. There have been a number of cases since the last session in which it would have been advisable to offer such rewards, but the absence of an appropriation has prevented it. I would urge upon the Legislature special attention to this matter. It is necessary to a proper enforcement of criminal justice that funds should be provided for this purpose.

BOARD OF HEALTH.

To devise some means of preventing the return of the scourge that so severely affected the town of Fernandina during the year 1877, and to protect our sea-port cities and towns from epidemics, and contagious or infectious diseases, is of the utmost importance, and I trust during your present session, you may be able to enact some measures looking to that end, either by establishing a State Board of Health, with such powers as will enable it to accomplish the purposes mentioned, or make some other law tending to the same purpose.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I express the hope that your labors may result in the substantial advancement of every material interest of the State. I have given you such information as the Constitution requires and recommended such matters as I think the public interest demands. It remains with you to take such action in relation to the matters recommended, and also in relation to such other matters as shall come before you, as in your legislative discretion you shall think will be for the best. Coming directly from the people, knowing their wants and necessities, I am satisfied that you will look to their best

interests. My sincere hope is that your session may be harmonious, and your actions meet with the approval of the people you represent.

GEO. F. DREW, *Governor.*

Mr. Lykes moved that the message be spread on the journal and 500 copies printed for the use of the Senate;

Which was adopted.

Leave of absence was granted to Senator Bryson until Friday morning.

Mr. Barnes offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Committee on Printing be instructed to have 500 copies of the daily journal printed for the use of the Senate and Assembly;

Which was adopted.

Mr. Orman offered the following resolution;

Resolved, That the President of the Senate appoint two pages to attend upon this body.

Amended by Mr. McMeekin that one be inserted for two;

Which was adopted.

Mr. Niblack offered the following resolution -

Resolved. That the Comptroller be and he is hereby requested to furnish for the information of this Senate an aggregate statement of the amount of revenue received from licenses on each profession, occupation, and business for the fiscal year 1878;

Which was adopted.

Senate adjourned till 10 A. M. to-morrow.